

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 19706 171802Z
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SUBJECT: GEORGIAN PARTY LEADER ON NATIONALISM

REF: MOSCOW 12709

1. SUMMARY. GEORGIAN COMMUNIST PARTY BOSS SHEVARDNADZE ISSUED A RINGING IF SOMEWHAT HOLLOW ENDORSEMENT OF SOVIET NATIONALITY POLICY AND ITS APPLICATION IN HIS REPUBLIC OCT 20 AT AN ALL-UNION CONFERENCE HELD IN TBILISI. IN HIS SPEECH, WHICH IS REPORTED IN THE DEC 4 GEORGIAN CP NEWSPAPER ZARYA VOSTOKA," SHEVARDNADZE ALSO MENTIONED STALIN BY NAME AND REFERRED TO BREZHNEV AS "VOZHD." IT SEEMS CLEAR GEORGIA'S EARLIER TROUBLES (REFTTEL) HAVE NOT EVAPORATED. WE ASSUME DEPT WILL HAVE TEXT, BUT ARE REPORTING HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SPEECH FOR WASHINGTON AND OTHER ADDRESSEES. END SUMMARY.

2. SHEVARDNADZE'S SPEECH--316 PARAGRAPHS LONG--WAS ENTITLED "CARRYING OUT THE LENINIST NATIONALIST POLICY
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 19706 171802Z

AND REAL PROBLEMS IN LIGHT OF THE DECISIONS OF THE 25TH PARTY CONGRESS" AND WAS DELIVERED TO THE ALL-UNION SCIENTIFIC-PRACTICAL CONFERENCE IN TBILISI OCT 20. IN GENERAL, THE GEORGIAN PARTY CHIEF OFFERS A BROAD BUT THIN DEFENSE OF THE SOVIET RECORD OF ASSISTING NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN GEORGIA AND OF LOCAL SUCCESS IN CARRYING

OUT CENTRAL DICTA. IN THE COURSE OF THE SPEECH, HE:

--REVIEWS THE WORK OF THE LEADING THEORETICIANS OF THE COMMUNIST NATIONALITY POLICY, FROM MARX AND ENGELS THROUGH LENIN TO BREZHNEV, A "DEEPLY COMMITTED INTERNATIONALIST" AND "VOZHD" OF THE PARTY AND PEOPLE;
--CITES STALIN BY NAME AS MAN WHO "DREW UPON THE TEACHING OF MARX, ENGELS AND LENIN IN THE WORK 'MARXISM AND THE NATIONALITY QUESTION; WHICH PLAYED A SIGNAL ROLE IN THE BATTLE OF THE CPSU AGAINST IDEOLOGICAL AND METAPHYSICAL THEORIES OF THE NATION."
--ASSERTS THAT CENTRAL ECONOMIC DIRECTION AND BROADENING THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUAL REPUBLICS ARE TWO DISTINCT, NON-CONTRADICTORY ECONOMIC POLICIES OF THE CPSU, THAT RESOURCES ARE ALLOCATED BETWEEN REPUBLICS SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF QUALITY AND QUANTITY OF WORK, THAT GEORGIA IS FULFILLING 10TH FIVE YEAR PLAN TASKS;
AND
--BRIEFLY, TOWARD THE END OF HIS SPEECH, CRITICIZES U.S. PROFITERRING AS A RESULT OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE ECONOMIES OF LESSER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES.

3. GIVEN THE FORUM, HOWEVER, SHEVARDNADZE DEVOTED MOST OF HIS TIME TO NATIONALITY POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION. HE NOTES AT THE BEGINNING OF HIS SPEECH THAT THE DECISION TO HOLD THE CONFERENCE IN TBILISI WAS ITSELF "PROOF OF THE IMPROVEMENT IN THE MORAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE" IN GEORGIA AND OF ITS SUCCESS IN "GETTING RID OF MANIFESTATIONS OF NATIONALISM AND CHAUVINISM" IN THE REPUBLIC. HE COULD "BOLDLY ASSERT" THAT ANY DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT, OR REVOLUTION, COULD ONLY PARTIALLY AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 MOSCOW 19706 171802Z

TEMPORARILY SOLVE OUTSTANDING QUESTIONS IF IT HAD NOT FIRST SOLVED THE NATIONALITY QUESTION. FORTUNATELY, HE NOTES, THE SOVIET SOLUTION OF THE NATIONALITY QUESTION HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL "WITHOUT HISTORICAL PRECEDENT."

4. CONTRARY TO WHAT "FOREIGN ENEMIES CLAIM," GEORGIA HAS BY NO MEANS LOST ITS SENSE OF NATIONALITY UNDER RUSSIAN RULE, SHEVARDNADZE ASSERTS. "ON THE CONTRARY, ONLY THROUGH ITS TIES TO THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE HAS THE GEORGIAN NATION BEEN ABLE TO SAFEGUARD AND DEVELOP SUCH PHENOMENA AS A COMMON LANGUAGE, TERRITORY, ECONOMY, PSYCHOLOGY AND CULTURE." DURING THE PERIOD AFTER ITS UNION WITH RUSSIA, AND PARTICULARLY AFTER THE ADVENT OF SOVIET POWER, GEORGIA HAS NOT ONLY NOT LOST ITS IDENTITY BUT MADE GREAT STRIDES FORWARD. ONLY "ENEMIES" OR THE "BLIND" FAIL TO SEE THIS PROGRESS, WHICH THE PARTY BOSS PROVES BY CITING A MASS OF STATISTICS. FOR EXAMPLE, THREE TIMES AS MANY BOOKS ARE PUBLISHED IN GEORGIAN AS IN

RUSSIAN IN THE REPUBLIC, AND WHILE 70 PERCENT OF THE SCHOOLS ARE GEORGIAN, ONLY 7 PERCENT ARE RUSSIAN. "COUNTLESS MILLIONS" HAVE BEEN SPENT ON DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL NATIONAL CULTURE, LITERATURE, SCIENCE, ART" AND ALL THIS IS NATURALLY HEARTILY SUPPORTED BY THE GEORGIAN CP.

5. JUST THE SAME, IT IS "NECESSARY TO RECALL THAT ELEMENTS OF NATIONALISM AND CHAUVINISM CAN APPEAR" WHENEVER THE "WORK OF THE PARTY ORGANIZATIONS DOES NOT MEET THE IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL NEEDS OF THE CPSU." AND ALTHOUGH "THERE IS NO SOCIAL-CLASS BASIS FOR NATIONALISM IN OUR COUNTRY AND ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO 'EVIL' IN THE 175-YEAR RUSSO-GEORGIAN UNION, THERE ARE A NUMBER OF FACTORS WHICH COULD LEAD TO UNSPECIFIED OUTBREAKS OF NATIONALISM."

6. SHEVARDNADZE IS HAZY AND PERHAPS EVEN CONTRADICTORY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 MOSCOW 19706 171802Z

IN HIS PRESCRIPTIONS FOR SOLVING THESE "FACTORS." HE NOTES, FOR EXAMPLE THAT "OUR IDEOLOGICAL FOES STRESS THAT OSTENSIBLY WE DON'T DEVOTE ENOUGH TIME TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE." SEVERAL COLUMNS LATER, HOWEVER, THE SPEAKER COMMENTS THAT "EACH PERSON SHOULD COMMAND RUSSIAN, THE LANGUAGE OF INTERCOMMUNICATION OF THE PEOPLES OF THE SOVIET UNION" WHICH ALSO AFFORDS ACCESS TO WORLD CULTURE. AND DESPITE EARLIER CLAIMS OF SOVIET DEVELOPMENT OF GEORGIAN ARTS, HE SAYS "WE NEED TO THINK ABOUT LITERATURE AND ART" AND COULD USE TOOLS LIKE "MOLODAYA GWARDIA" AND OTHER FORMS OF PATRIOTIC (SOVIET) LITERATURE TO ASSIST IN INSPIRING THE YOUNG. SCHOOL CHILDREN SHOULD KNOW WHAT THE NATIONAL ECONOMY HAS ACCOMPLISHED.

7. COMMENT. THOUGH TYPICALLY RAMBLING AND VOLUMINOUS, SHEVARDNADZE'S SPEECH REVEALS IN ITS TWISTS AND TURNS A LEADER (AND PROBABLY HIS LOCAL PARTY) CAUGHT BETWEEN THE NECESSITY TO PAY RITUAL RESPECTS TO THE CENTRAL PARTY LEADERS AND APPARATUS AND THE REALITY OF PARTY FAILURES IN GEORGIA. IF HE CONTRADICTS HIMSELF, IT IS BECAUSE HIS OWN SITUATION IS PARADOXICAL. ON THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO US, THIS SPEECH SEEMS TO CONFIRM THAT THE SITUATION IN GEORGIA IS STILL, AS WE NOTED EARLIER (REFTEL, A MESS. AS THE PRESIDING AND RESPONSIBLE OFFICER, SHEVARDNADZE MUST THEREFORE FEEL LESS THAN SECURE ABOUT HIS OWN POSITION. MATLOCK

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